

IN THE CLAIMS

Amend claims 1, 4, and 6-8 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for managing a plurality of actual execution workflows, each thereof, expressed by electronic data, for executing a flow of work, on ~~the basis of a virtual workflow for monitoring said plurality of actual execution workflows,~~ said actual execution workflows ~~and said virtual workflow~~ each including a plurality of nodes, comprising the steps of:

generating at least one virtual workflow, expressed by electronic data, including a plurality of nodes, on the basis of selected nodes of said actual execution workflows, said selected nodes being selected by first users of said actual execution workflows and permitted to be disclosed to a second user of said virtual workflow;

linking at least one process node of each of said actual execution workflows with a node of said virtual workflow, a process state of said process node thus linked being permitted to be disclosed to the second user of said virtual workflow ~~a user of another actual execution workflow;~~

specifying a node of said virtual workflow;

acquiring a node of said actual execution workflows linked with the node thus specified; and

outputting a progress state of the acquired node as a progress state of the specified node of said virtual workflow.

2. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

setting a user's privilege of operation at each node of said virtual workflow; and

registering the user's privilege of operation thus set in a virtual workflow definition for defining said virtual workflow.

3. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

determining an actual execution workflow definition for defining said actual execution workflows by using an attribute of a virtual workflow definition for defining said virtual workflow; and

inputting execution information of said actual execution workflows by using the actual execution workflow definition thus determined.

4. (Currently Amended) A virtual workflow managing system for managing a plurality of actual execution workflows,

each thereof, expressed by electronic data, for executing a flow of work, accessing an actual execution workflow definition for defining said actual execution workflows ~~and a virtual workflow definition for defining a virtual workflow for monitoring said actual execution workflows~~, said actual execution workflows ~~and said virtual workflow~~ each including a plurality of nodes, respectively, comprising:

generating at least one virtual workflow, expressed by electronic data, including a plurality of nodes, on the basis of selected nodes of said actual execution workflows, said selected nodes being selected by first users of said actual execution workflows and permitted to be disclosed to a second user of said virtual workflow;

a storage unit for storing said actual execution workflow definition containing an ID of said actual execution workflows and an ID of each of said nodes contained in said actual execution workflow;

a storage unit for storing virtual workflow definition containing an ID of said virtual workflow , an ID of each of said nodes contained in said virtual workflow and access privilege information given to a user using said virtual workflow definition at each node of said virtual workflow; and

a workflow link definition storage unit for storing an ID of a link linking an ID of a node of said virtual workflow with an ID of a corresponding node selected from said actual execution workflows.

5. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein there are a plurality of virtual workflow definitions for defining said virtual workflow, said method further comprising the steps of:

inputting information for selecting virtual workflow definition ; and

determining a virtual workflow definition on the basis of said input information.

6. (Currently Amended) In a workflow system having a client and a server, a method for managing a plurality of actual execution workflows, each thereof, expressed by electronic data, for executing a flow of work, ~~on the basis of a virtual workflow for monitoring said plurality of actual execution workflows~~, said actual execution workflows ~~and said virtual workflow~~ each including a plurality of nodes, said method comprising the steps of:

means for generating at least one virtual workflow, expressed by electronic data, including a plurality of nodes,

on the basis of selected nodes of said actual execution workflows, said selected nodes being selected by first users of said actual execution workflows and permitted to be disclosed to a second user of said virtual workflow;

holding a virtual workflow definition for defining nodes of said virtual workflow according to purpose of use by said client, an actual execution workflow definition for defining processing nodes of said actual execution workflows and a workflow link definition for linking said virtual workflow definition of nodes of said virtual workflow with said actual workflow definitions of selected nodes of said actual execution workflows, on the basis of an indication given from said client;

searching a node of said actual execution workflows corresponding to a node of said virtual workflow specified by said client, based on said workflow link definition; and

outputting a progress state of said searched node of said actual execution workflows as a progress state of said specified node of said virtual workflow to said client.

7. (Currently Amended) In a system having a client and a server, and for managing a plurality of actual execution workflows, each thereof, expressed by electronic data, for executing a flow of work, ~~on the basis of a virtual workflow~~

~~for monitoring said plurality of actual execution workflows,~~
said actual execution workflows ~~and said virtual workflow~~ each
including a plurality of nodes, said server comprising:

means for generating at least one virtual workflow,
expressed by electronic data, including a plurality of nodes,
on the basis of selected nodes of said actual execution
workflows, said selected nodes being selected by first users
of said actual execution workflows and permitted to be
disclosed to a second user of said virtual workflow;

an information storage unit for storing a virtual
workflow definition for defining nodes of said virtual
workflow according to a purpose of use by said client, an
actual workflow definition for defining processing nodes of
said actual execution workflows and a workflow link definition
for linking said virtual workflow definition of nodes of said
virtual workflow with said actual workflow definition of
selected nodes of said actual execution workflows;

a processing unit for searching a node of said
actual execution workflows corresponding to a node of said
virtual workflow specified by said client, based on said
workflow link definition; and

a processing unit for outputting a progress state of
said searched node of said actual execution workflows as a

progress state of said specified node of said virtual workflow to said client.

8. (Currently Amended) In a storage medium readable by a computer for storing a program of a method for managing a plurality of actual execution workflows, each thereof, expressed by electronic data, for executing a flow of work, ~~on the basis of a virtual workflow for monitoring said plurality of actual execution workflows,~~ executed by a sever in a workflow system having a client and said server, said actual execution workflows ~~and said virtual workflow~~ each including a plurality of nodes, respectively, said method comprising the steps of:

generating at least one virtual workflow, expressed by electronic data, including a plurality of nodes, on the basis of selected nodes of said actual execution workflows, said selected nodes being selected by first users of said actual execution workflows and permitted to be disclosed to a second user of said virtual workflow;

holding a virtual workflow definition for defining nodes of said virtual workflow according to a purpose of use by said client, an actual execution workflow definition for defining processing nodes of said actual execution workflows and a workflow link definition for linking said virtual

workflow definition of nodes of said virtual workflow with said actual workflow definition of selected nodes of said actual execution workflows, based on an indication given from said client;

searching a node of said actual execution workflows corresponding to a node of said virtual workflow specified by said client, based on said workflow link definition; and

outputting a progress state of said searched node of said actual execution workflows as a progress state of said specified node of said virtual workflow to said client.

9. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 6, wherein said virtual workflow definition holds information about a type of a privilege of operation by said client to said actual workflow definition at each node of said virtual workflow, said type being at least one privilege selected from a display privilege, a reference privilege and an input privilege.

10. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 6, wherein each of said nodes contained in said virtual workflow definition is linked with a node selected from a plurality of actual workflow definitions.

11. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

if a privilege of reference to the acquired node is not permitted to a user requesting the progress state of the specified node, searching the nodes of said actual execution workflows for a previous node closest to the acquired node and having a privilege of reference permitted to the user; and

outputting a progress state of the previous node as a progress state of the specified node of said virtual workflow.